564 rank came certain small castes of middle class,
794 non-military Nayars whose work was connected with temples. Vattekads were oil-mongers for temples, Odatt Nayars, temple tile-makers; and Andura Nayars temple pot-makers. One Vattekad lineage was present in each village to supply oil to the temple; its members might receive good from all the higher castes but might not give to them. Often, the headman of the Vattekad lineage was also the shaman of the Na-
[791] yar Bhagavadi temple. Odatt and Andura Nayars were very small castes, usually with one lineage to about six villages.

564 Below the middle class Nayars in rank came three castes of servant-Nayars, also non-mili-
[764] tary: Chidigans or funeral priests of the higher matrilineal castes, Veluthedans or washermen
[305] of all the castes above them; and Vilakkatara-
[296] vans or barbers of all the castes above them. One lineage of each of these castes was usually present in each village. Chidigans ranked above barbers and washermen, who disputed for rank and would not interdine or intermarry.

[361] In each village, all of the castes so far mentioned (provided they were present) were called "high," "good" [24] or "clean" castes and lived in a separate portion of the village, each house in its own large garden, round the temples and the local janmi's house. Except for Nayar barbers and washermen, all might enter either Nam budiri or Nayar temples. Within this group,
[783] lower castes were forbidden to touch higher castes because of ritual pollution, but individuals of different castes might approach each other within a few feet.

564 kanam tenants of the village, on a triennial ten-
427 ure (verum-pattam) retaining about one-fifth of the produce for their own sustenance and paying
564 the rest as rent in kind. One or more small
437 patrilineal groups of each of the other castes had what was called a desam avakasam or "village right," namely the right to work exclusively for members of their natal village. Sometimes, in the case of small castes such as astrologers and barbers, the right might extend to several adjacent villages who collectively shared the labour of one servant family. Avakasams were hereditary in patrilineal groups; they involved payment in paddy and vegetables by each patron household, of whatever caste, after the two harvests of the year, and the right to take part in village festivals and be fed at higher caste festivals and marriages.

[791] Astrologers and artisans were hired by all the higher castes of the village, by each other and
[305] by Iravas who ranked above them. Barbers worked for all the lower polluting castes of this group, but not for the "good" castes who em-
[296] ployed the Nayar barber. Washermen laundered for all the lower polluting castes but not regularly for the "good" castes, who employed the Nayar washerman; however, the low [26] caste washerman's lineage must provide clean cloths for the "good" castes after death, menstruation and childbirth and had ritual obligations to high caste women on the two latter occasions. Bow-
564 makers served Nayars and Iravas. Each of the
783 lower polluting castes was endogamous and inter-dined equally only within the caste. Rules of

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Central Kerala Nayar

564 794 ranked below Nambudiris but above retainer Nayars and certain matrilineal temple-servant castes. The latter included Nambyars, Puduvals, and Marars, three castes of drummers, and Psharodis and Variyars, castes of temple stewards.

564 794 The temple-servant castes were small and lived chiefly in villages owned by Nambudiri Brahmans or in sankētams. Four types of temples were distinguishable among the higher castes. First were the large temples of the sankētams, whose estates were managed by Nambudiris. They were dedicated to all-India, Puranic deities, usually Siva or Vishnu. Second, were the private temples of individual Nambudiri families in villages owned by Nambudiris, which were small replicas of the first type. Third were the private temples of royal and chiefly matrilineages, dedicated to Bhagavadi or Bhadrakali—the Nayar goddess of war, epidemic, land, and fertility. Fourth were the smaller Bhagavadi temples of village Nayars, each collectively managed by an assembly of Nayar retainers of one or more villages.

[782] [793] In the first two types of temple animal sacrifice was forbidden. Offerings were of fruit, flowers, incense, and fire. The priests were low-ranking Nambudiri Brahmans. Nayars might enter the outer courtyards of such temples but might not perform rites there. In a village which formed part of a sankētam there was sometimes no Nayar population at all; a group of lineages of one or more temple-servant castes replaced them as retainers of the Brahmans and as permanent tenants. [613] In Nambudiri villages containing a temple of the second type, one or two lineages of some temple-servant caste would be attached to the temple, but there would invariably also be a group of Sudra Nayar retainers with their own Bhagavadi temple.

564 794 613 In villages under a Nayar headman there might be only one Bhagavadi temple managed collectively by Nayars. One lineage of the Marar caste might be present to drum in the temple, but the other temple-servant castes did not work in Nayar village temples. Similarly, in a royal or chiefly village containing a large Bhagavadi temple of the ruling lineage, the temple-servant castes might be absent except for one lineage of Marars. Persons of other temple-servant castes might however come from nearby villages to assist at special ceremonies.

794 564 [793] [791] [782] In Bhagavadi temples the regular priest was usually of a special low subdivision of Nambudiris (Adigals). In addition a Nayar shaman, attached to the temple, periodically became possessed by the goddess and declared her will to the people. Daily rites in the Bhagavadi temple were similar to those in a Brahman temple, but annual festi-

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please the serpent god and to flatter him so that he may bear the welfare of the host in mind, and guard the family against disease, misfortune and harm accruing from human or supernatural agencies.

There are three important ceremonies in connection with serpent worship called *sarpa yaga*, *sarpa tulal* and *sarpa preeti*. They are conducted either at home or in the temple, usually on Sundays, since it is held that the serpents are most powerful and lenient on that day and are in a benign mood for granting favours.

Sarpa preeti is conducted in the house whenever misfortune occurs. The astrologer is consulted who decrees that a curse is upon the house and the serpents are angry. Thereupon elaborate worship is conducted with much ritual, and propitiation of the angered deities is effected and normalcy returns.

Sarpa tulal is a form of divine cure of the afflicted. The unfortunate victims of leprosy, mental or other diseases gather to worship the serpent gods praying for a cure. The priest conducts the worship and the afflicted go into a trance-like state and dance in religious fervour. Thereafter the priest throws consecrated turmeric powder on their heads and faces. The devotee feels blessed and cures are believed to occur.

Sarpa yaga is an annual festival in which many families jointly contribute to hold the ceremony. It is held usually for the collective prosperity of the village and lasts for two or three days. The afflicted and diseased persons dance in a trance for a long time and are given coco-nut water by the priest. At the end of the *puja* the priest sprinkles turmeric powder over the heads of the devotees and pours out holy water thrice in the palm of their hands.

One of the special attributes of snakes is their power over disease. The snake deities are specifically importuned for the prevention of skin diseases, stomach disorders, mental disturbances and for sterility. Leucoderma and leprosy are specially regarded as due to the curse of snakes who might have been angered by some unwitting disrespect shown towards them, or by accidental misdemeanour on the part of the inadvertant devotee. Of particular impor-

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PL. XII.

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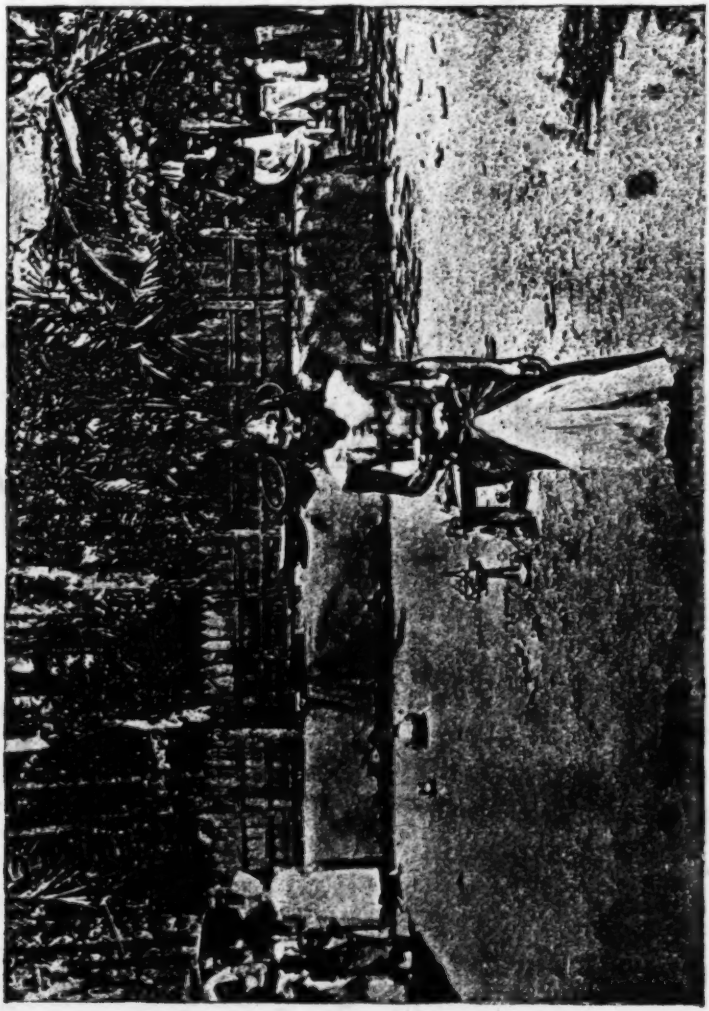

A VELICHCHAPPAD.

[Facing P. 242]

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796 of the festival, so make the following excerpt from
184 Mr. Logan's well-known "Manual of Malabar." "It takes
788 the people in great crowds from their homes. The whole country near the lines of march rings with the shouts 'Nada-a Nada-a' of the pilgrims to the favourite shrines, chief of which is that at Cranganore (Kodungallûr) in the Native State of Cochin. Of what takes place when the pilgrims reach this spot perhaps the less said the better. In their passage up to the shrine the cry of 'Nada-a Nada-a' (march, march away) is varied by terms of unmeasured abuse levelled at the goddess (a Bhagavati) of the shrine. This abusive language is supposed to be acceptable to her. On arrival at the shrine they desecrate it in every conceivable way, believing that this too is acceptable; they throw stones and filth, howling volleys
[564] of opprobrium at her house. The chief of the fisherman caste, styled *Kûli Muttatta Arayan*, has the privilege of being the first to begin the work of polluting the *Bhoot*
[782] or shrine. Into other particulars it is unnecessary to enter; cocks are slaughtered and sacrificed. The worshipper gets flowers only, and no holy water after paying his vows. Instead of water he proceeds outside and drinks arrack or toddy, which an attendant Nâyar serves out. All castes are free to go, including Tîyars and low caste people. The temple was originally only a Bhoot or holy tree with a platform. The image in the temple is said to have been introduced only of recent years." It is a pity Mr. Logan is so reticent. My information is that the headman of the Mukkuvans (fisher caste) opens the festival by solemnly making a fœcal deposit on the image. Here again there is the same strange union of everything that is filthy, abusive, foul and irreverent, with every mode of expressing the deepest religious feeling.

Leaving now the religion, expression of which may be seen at temple festivals and during pilgrimages to these scenes of religious fervour, we will turn to that which we see in the house of the Nâyar at home.

791 Plate XII shows a man standing with a sword of the shape known as Nândakam. He is an individual called a Velichchappâd, and as he stood to be photographed by me his forehead and face streamed with blood from a self-inflicted wound on the head. The Velichchappâd is a
771 familiar character in Malabar. His profession illustrates the very mixed character of the Hinduism of the Nâyar, partaking as it does of much of the lower cult,—animism,

1/2 [see cat. 116, plate facing p. 242 -- An.]

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performance. As he ran, every now and then he cut his forehead with the strange misshapen sword, pressing it against the skin and sawing (vertically) up and down. The blood streamed all over his face. Presently he became wilder and wilder, and whizzed round the lamp, bending forward towards the kalasam. Evidently some deity, some spirit, was present here, and spoke through the mouth of the Velichchappâd. This, I think, undoubtedly represents the belief of all who were present. When he had done whizzing round the kalasam, he soon became a normal being and stood before my camera. The fee for this self-inflicted laceration is one rupee and some odds and ends of rice, etc. I saw the Velichchappâd about three days afterwards going to perform elsewhere. The wound on his forehead had healed! The careful observer can always identify a Velichchappâd by the triangular-like patch over the forehead where the hair will not grow, and where the skin is somewhat indurated. The Velichchappâds seem to get used to cutting their foreheads as the eels to skinning.

We shall find the oracle again when we come to the lower races. I have seen a fine demonstration of it amongst the Paniyans of Wynâd when engaged in a regular corrobboree. An extremely interesting example of this combination of this phase of the lower Dravidian cult which is in no way Hindu, with the Brâhmanic religion, is to be seen at Mailâr in the Bellary district. There the oracle is bound up with a story about Rishis and Asuras, an incarnation of Siva and Pârvati, and many thousands assemble yearly to hear the oracle delivered by a man on the top of a huge affair representing Siva's bow, speaking the words of the god.

Before concluding the subject of religion, allusion must be made to the worship of ancestors. Cremation of the dead, as in the case of the Nambûtiris, is done in the garden or compound surrounding the Taravâd house, in the south or south-west corner of it; so the Nâyar has the ashes and spirits of his ancestors with him always. We have seen already how that pacification of the spirits of those who have passed from view, and who are in the land of the shades, pervade the lives of the living. They are worshipped every new moon day, but especially on the new moon of Karkitakam,* of Tulâm and of Kumbham

* The names of the Malayali months have been given already—see Nambûtiris (Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 2).

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ASTROLOGY, MAGIC,* WITCHCRAFT.

Astrology.—The ordinary astrologer of Malabar is a man of the Kanisan or Panikkar† caste, a community relatively low in the social scale, therefore carrying pollution to those of the higher caste. A curious position in society for people of a learned profession to occupy. The Panikkar is also, very often, the school-master. He is in request in connection with every social function, religious or other, and of course, at every birth. His astrology, he will tell you, is divided into three parts:

(1) Ganita, which treats of the constellations;
(2) Samkita, which explains the origin of the constellations, comets, falling stars, earthquakes;
(3) Hôra, by which the fate of man is explained.

The Panikkar, who follows in the foot-steps of his forefathers, should have a thorough knowledge of astrology and of mathematics, and be learned in the Vêdas. He should be sound in mind and body, truthful and patient. He should look well after his family, and he should worship regularly the nine planets:—Sûryan—the Sun; Chandran—Moon; Chovva—Mars; Bûdhan—Mercury; Vyâzham, or Guru, or Brihaspati—Jupiter; Sukran, or Sani—Venus; Râhu and Kêtu. The two last, though not visible, are, oddly enough, classed as planets by the Panikkar. They are said to be two parts of an Âsura who was cut in two by Vishnu.

I here reproduce a diagram made for me by a Panikkar showing the relative positions of the planets on the 7th of April 1895:

Sûryan, Bûdhan.	Sukkran.	Chovva.	Brihaspati.
Râhu.			
			Kêtu.
		Sani.	Chandran.

N.B.—Chandran remains 2½ days in each of the 12 *rasis* or celestial chambers.

* What was said under "Magic and sorcery" when describing Nambûtiri Brahmans, Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I, applies also to the Nâyar.

† This is not to be confounded with the honorific Panikkar affixed to the name of a Nâyar.

739
[791] The Panikkars dabble also in magic. In Plates XVI, XVII are figured four yantrams, selected from a number in my possession as representative, presented to me by a Panikkar. They should be written on a thin gold, silver or copper plate (a yantram written on gold is the most effective), and worn on the person. As a rule, the yantram is placed in a little cylindrical case made of silver, fastened to a string tied round the waist. Many of these are often worn by the same person. The yantram is sometimes written on cadjan or paper. I have one of this kind in my collection taken from the neck of a goat. It is common to see them worn on the arm, or round the neck.

No. I. Aksharamâla.—Fifty-one letters. Used in connection with every other yantram. Each letter has its own meaning, and does not represent any word. In itself this yantram is powerless; but it gives life to all others. It must be written on the same plate as the other yantram.

[782] *No. II. Sûlini.*—For protection against sorcery, or devils. This is to invoke the goddess and secure her aid. The ceremony brings a blessing to the receiver of the charm.

[776] *No. III. Mâha Sûlini.*—To be used to prevent all kinds of harm through devils, chief of whom is Pulatini—he who eats infants. May be used also as protective against enemies. Women wear it to avert miscarriage. The letter in the middle, Hûm Mâha Sûlini. That in the rim is Om.

[782] *No. IV. Kâla Bhâiravi.*—Represents the goddess. The goddess must be pleased *first* by worship. No sacrifice, which is rather odd, as this terrible goddess is generally represented in Southern India as loving blood. The letters do not form any mantram. Each letter has life in itself. Prevents all harm from enemies, and attack by devils.

Other yantrams to be used in much the same way as these are:—

[856] The *Ganapati* yantram. To increase knowledge. To put away fear and shyness.

The *Sarasvati* yantram. To enable its possessor to please his listeners, and increase his knowledge.

The *Panchakshari* yantram, a square containing 81 smaller squares, in each a mystic letter; the whole representing Siva. For persons on whom medicines have no [776] effect. Also against evil spirits. A person out of whom an evil spirit has been driven is perfectly safe ever after with this carried on his person.

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The *Santâna gôpâlam* yantram. As a whole, it represents Sri Krishna. The letters in it (there are 101) put together in a certain way form a mantram. It is used by barren women so that they may bear children. It may be traced on a metal plate and worn in the usual way, or on a slab of butter which is then eaten. When the latter method is adopted it is repeated on 41 successive days, during which the woman as well as the Panikkar may not have sexual connection.

The *Sri Sûkra* yantram is another used by childless men and women in order to obtain offspring. The others are prophylactic against evil spirits (chiefly), to defeat enemies, to succeed in all undertakings and prevent loss of property by theft, to win over the good feeling of others, and so on. The *Sudarsana* yantram not only relieves sickness, but when drawn in 5 colours on the ground and worshipped while repeating a mantram (too long to quote) wards off the evil influence caused through black magic! Another, the *Navva* yantram, drawn in ashes of cowdung on a new cloth which is then tied round the waist, relieves a women in labour. Yet another, the *Asvârûdha* yantram (Asva, horse; ârûḍha, to climb) would also be useful to some people, as a person wearing it is able to cover long distances easily on horseback; and he may make the most refractory horse amenable by tying it round its neck. It will also help to cure sick cattle. In some the letters or syllables form a distinct mantram, while in others each has its own mystic meaning.

Let me hasten to assure any one desirous of applying one of these charms to himself that they are entirely inoperative unless accompanied in the first place with the mystic rite which is the secret of the Panikkar.

Magic—The Evil Eye.—One day as I reached my camp in the Kôttayam taluk, North Malabar, my ears were assailed by the din of incessant drumming hard by. In the evening I was able to see and converse with the drummer, Châtu by name, aged 23, by caste Malayan. The Malayans are hereditary professional magicians, few in number, inferior in the social scale. They are not the only magicians. We have seen already (Bulletin, Volume III, No. 1, page 50) that some of the Nambûtiri Brahmans practise magic; but to the Malayan the Nâyar appears as often as to any other kind of mantram-man.

Châtu was delightfully communicative. He had been putting away the effects of the evil eye from one of his clientèle;—hence the din. In effect he said: certain

754 persons have the evil eye by nature. Potta Kannu, blind eye it is called. A person having the evil eye may, while *thinking evil*, infect man, woman or child by simply looking at them. Those who have the evil eye are generally women: men rarely. The cause is in the eye itself. No evil spirit is in any way connected with it. A woman may affect her own child. A person having the evil eye, looking at a beautiful or a healthy child, will affect it without intending to do so. The injury done through the eye is often unintentional. The power of the eye to do mischief is altogether beyond the volition of its possessor; but it is excessively virulent when mischief is really intended. Colour of the eye matters nothing. Nor is possession of the evil eye confined to [564] any caste. He knew a Nambûtiri who had it. The effect of it on a child is that it becomes lean, feverish, loses its well-favoured appearance, and cries in its sleep. Men and women suffer from headaches and pains in the limbs. Animals are disposed to lassitude and eat little. Cows will not give milk.

791 The Malayan drives away all these unpleasant ail-
755 ments by invoking an evil spirit Vudikandan by name:
[776] male, having no wife. By means of magic he *forces* Vudikandan to do what he requires of him. But how? The process he would not tell. It is secret. That is, all but the drumming. No one outside the Malayan caste may be initiated into the fearsome mysteries. The spirit Vudikandan is used for no other rite. The Malayan also drives out evil spirits.

755 Châtu presented me with a mantram, a magic verse,
[824] written with a style on a cadjan leaf, the common
[212] stationery of Malabar, and told me that whenever any part of my person becomes affected by the evil eye, I should whisper the mantram over a piece of string and tie the string round my leg, or other limb or part of the body which suffers, and cure will take place instantaneously.

He works by day: never by night. A whole day is occupied in driving away injury through the evil eye in a bad case. He need not be starving; in fact has a good meal before he begins. The generous Châtu presented me also with a couple of mantrams such as would cure an easy case of harm through the evil eye, and explained their use.

[539] (1) "Ôm: Namo: Bhagavatôm Srîparamêsvaranûm Srî Pârvati yum Pallivêṭa Nâyaṭinnâî Ezhunellumpôl Srî

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754 789 is truly human. Belief in magic and witchcraft, symbolic hurts and cures, and the like, are very deep in human nature; reason and culture do not efface it. It is one of the earliest heirlooms of the human family, and it will in all probability persist to the end. We cannot think of man as being without it.* Hence the interest in investigating it.

● 791 But now, as Patelin's Judge said to the draper, let us return *à nos moutons*. There is nothing secret about the profession of the Panikkar. His rites are secret of course. They are *his* secret. But his profession is an honourable one. He is not ashamed of it, nor will he deny it. That is, so long as he confines his talents to the practice of *good* magic.

754 With the professor of the more lucrative *black magic*, it is quite another thing. No one will ever admit publicly that he practises *black magic*.

Black magic.—It would never do to avoid altogether the subject of black magic, which is cultivated and practised to a much greater extent in Malabar than elsewhere in the Southern Presidency. I hope to have more to say about it later on when we come to description of some of the lower races, and for the present we must be content with a rather bare description of it. We have seen already that a few Nambûtiri Brahmans practise it. A few Nâyars also do so. But as a rule the man who really works in black magic is the Parayan. 754 564 The old story. It is always the man of inferior race who is superior in black magic. The Parayans of Malabar are not, I think, identical with the Pariahs (Parayas) of Southern India. There are obvious differences in physique. In parts of rural Malabar one may see a Parayan's little hut far away on the hill side, but one tries in vain to see and speak to its inmates, who flee into the jungle. The Parayans are complete outcastes, and their presence carries pollution to one of any superior caste within about a furlong. It is not too much to say that, as a rule, they are abhorred as the lowest of the low. They eat beef, and are therefore quite outside the pale of Hinduism. [262] [673] I have heard of fairly well authenticated cases of their stealing children of Nâyars, hiding them away in the forest and

[171] * The reader who has not given much attention to the subject of Folklore, may be surprised by the evidence of the persistence of these beliefs in England, available in the publications of the Folklore Society, London. See "County Folklore," chapters on Witchcraft, etc.

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754 object to be milked; how to cure a headache; to prevent
812 bad dreams, and so on.

N.B.—A mantram must be spoken, breathed, whispered with extreme accuracy. There must be no omission or false accent. Anything of the kind, or wrong pronunciation, destroys its efficacy at once.

FAMOUS MAGICIANS OF MALABAR.

● 791 We will close this chapter on magic which, though painfully inadequate, is already rather too long for its purpose, by mention of some of the famous workers in the art. Those who are familiar with the west coast will at once recall to mind the names of three Brâhman families whose scions are famed throughout the land as possessors of stores of magic, and at the same time—so interwoven is magic with religion!—revered for their saintliness. The eldest member of one of these is said to be "an honoured guest throughout the length and breadth of Kêrala; and on certain State occasions in Trevandrum and elsewhere, his presence is indispensable." A well-known tradition relates how that magic came, so to speak, into the family. (It is not necessary to give the family name, even though it is a household word on the west coast).

773 Long ago in the days of the Perumals, a Brâhman and
791 his friend were belated in the Yakshi paramba (*yakshi*—
776 female demon, *paramba*—garden) near Trichur.* The place was dreary; nothing but palms around. Suddenly they were accosted by lovely damsels who asked them to pass the night under their roof, and soon they were lodged in a sumptuous house, each in a separate chamber. But in the night, the damsels who had, *Lorelei* fashion, attracted the travellers, resumed their demoniacal forms and ate the Brâhman. His friend they could not touch as he had on his person a grandha sacred to Bhagavati; but in the morning he found himself perched on the top of a palm tree underneath which lay the bones of his friend, the Brâhman.

The Brahman's widow gave birth to a son soon after the strange death of her husband. When the boy was eleven years of age, she related to him how he had been made fatherless. He vowed vengeance on the Yakshis and Gandharvas (male demons) and, like a sensible boy, set about preparation for his life-task. It was not long before he had mastered the Vedas and all learning, and having done so he retired to the jungle, where he was

* To this day people avoid this place at night.

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engaged in prayer and meditation for seven years. His devotion so pleased Surya, the sun god, that he appeared before him in human form and handed him a grandah, which is to this day the greatest work on magic in existence. The kind attention of the sun god accounts for the prefix "Sûrya" to the family name.

Now well equipped, he made war on the Yakshis and Gandharvas, and compelled the Yakshi who had devoured his father to appear before him. She begged for mercy, offering to serve him faithfully. But he would have none of her and made her enter the sacrificial fire, and she was consumed. Then her Gandharva lover turned up, most inconveniently, and cursed the Brahman magician to suffer death on the forty-first following day. It was now the magician's turn to beg for mercy, and the Gandharva, more merciful than the Brahman had been to the Yakshi, extended it to him. On one condition, however, that on the forty-first day he would worship at the Alangât Tiruvalore temple in expiation. Naturally, he went to fulfil it, and preparatory to worshipping, descended into the temple tank to bathe. All at once he was seized with delirium and raved like a maniac, biting the wooden beams of the bathing shed. He died after enduring frightful agonies. The marks of his teeth are to be seen to this day! Moral—Don't meddle with magic.

Another famous magician was by caste a Ravuthan (a class of Tamil Muhammadans of which there are a few on the west coast) who died about 30 years ago. The story is that having been turned out of his father's house, he was in sad plight, when, awaking from sleep under a tree, a white-bearded Rishi * confronted him and presented him with a grandha of magic, which he put to such good use that he died a very wealthy man. Here are two authenticated stories from the families of Nâyars of good position whom he assisted in each case.

(1) A Nâyar lady, having lost several children in infancy, sought the magician. He came to her house, and asked for a common mud pot, a fowl, some rice and some pepper. With what formality is not said, but the fowl (alive?), the rice and the pepper were put into the pot, which was buried in the ground under the lady's cot. Every day, she ate some of the rice and pepper, and in due time produced a daughter who is now living.

(2) Nearly every young Nâyar woman wears a talisman, protective against evil spirits. The Ravuthan

* It is rather comical, a Rishi appearing to a Muhammadan! Again the queer mixture of religious ideas.

789
791 magician was called in to prepare one of these. Placing an ordinary style and a small sheet of copper in a box, he closed it. Presently a noise was heard inside the box; and in a few moments a sound as of the style falling. The box was opened and magic figures were found to be inscribed on the copper sheet. The lady wears the talisman now! The magician must have been in a favourable mood on the occasion, as he is said to have given an additional performance on his own account. When he had placed the style and the tiny sheet of copper in the box, taking two young cocoanuts in his hands, he kept on throwing them in the air and catching them. "What will you have in each?" he asked. "Honey in one and boiled milk in the other" was the answer. Of course these were found in the cocoanuts when they were opened by the magician, but it was somewhat gross of the Nâyar gentleman to test the quality of the milk by turning it into curds the next
[493] day. Wonderful stories are told of this man who used to be seen at night carried in a mancheel by invisible bearers, whose weary chant could be heard, but whose bodily presence was beyond the reach of human eye.

791 The last and the chief of this trio is the once famous Kandeth Nayar who departed this life about a hundred
[782] years ago. Every one knows about the Kandeth Nayar, and any one now-a-days who wants to injure another invokes his aid, and resorts to his tomb to fulfil his vow. I understand that sacrifices at his tomb are common, and that his power reaches from the land of shades in almost the same strength as when he lived.

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754 The rather incoherent way in which the terms warlock, magician, have been used seems to demand some explanation. Strictly speaking, the Parayan Ôḍiyan is the only warlock. Magician is scarcely the correct term for the ordinary worker in magic. Nevertheless, it is scarcely possible to avoid a somewhat indiscriminate use of these terms on account of the way in which the functions of the warlock, the magician, the astrologer, and even the priest are really interwoven one with the other. The professed magician is often also the warlock and *vice versâ*. The vernacular word, which is as catholic as that which stands for "Religion," is "mantravâḍi"—mantram man; he who is sought every day of the year by hundreds of the people of Kêrala, to relieve them of their physical troubles and infirmities, to cure their cattle, to injure their enemies, aye, even to destroy them.

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to grow up. There is one important custom (and Mr. Ananta Krishna Aiyer forgets to notice it)[1] which forbids two generations of girls being married together. When girls become mothers at sixteen, generations mingle frequently and often there may be girls younger than oneself who are one's mother's sisters and, therefore, stand logically in the same position as one's mother. The custom is that they should not undergo the ceremony together, though this is strictly kept up only in richer families.

The first step to this ceremony is a village and *enangar* council. The prominent people of the village and the *enangars* are invited and the *Kāranavan* takes counsel with them as to the various arrangements with regard to the ceremony. After the *Kaniyan*, or the medicine man (who is also the astrologer and magician), has fixed the auspicious hour for the ceremony, a *pandal*, or a decorated tent, is put up in the presence of the village elders, in the *Muttam*. In the middle of the tent so erected is kept the *Astamangalyam* (Sanskrit word *Asta*=8, *mangalyam*=happiness giving). The *Astamangalyam* consists of a measure of paddy, some rice, an absolutely white cloth (to show purity), an arrow (to show the warlike character), lighted lamp (uninterrupted prosperity), a looking-glass, and a *cheppu* (which is the Malabar equivalent of a powder puff), and a blossom of the coco-nut palm.

The ceremony of *Talikettu* can take place any time of the day, only it must be an auspicious hour. Evening is preferred because more gaiety is possible. Early in the morning the girls are taken to the family tanks by the women of the *Enangar* house, and have an oil bath. After this they are elaborately dressed. They put on various ornaments used only for that day. All the families, of course, do not possess these ornaments; generally, only one or two families in the village have them, but they are available for all on such occasions.

The tier of the *Tali*, who is generally a priest, or sometimes a Kshatriya lord, is invited, and he stops at a house near by. The day before the ceremony he goes, accompanied by the village elders on an elephant, in a procession to the nearest temple and gets the *Tali* consecrated by the priest of the temple. In these days I have seen the *Tali*-tier taken in a motor car to the temple, though the slow-moving elephant is more impressive.

At the auspicious hour the bridegroom, in a warrior's dress (with sword, etc.), arrives at the house, accompanied by a party of the villagers. He is welcomed by the male members of the family, and taken to a seat of honour. There the brother (own or collateral) of the girls washes his feet (this is a custom of extreme politeness prevalent among the Hindus). Then the brides are brought into the *pandal*. They make a *pradikshana* (go round the *pandal* by their left three or seven times). The eldest girl's father's sister's son (i.e., her marriageable cousin) gives some brand-new pieces of fine silk cloth, and then the priest or the warrior ties the *Tali* round the girls' necks. This is followed by a huge feast which goes on for four days. On

[1] *Cochin Tribes and Castes*, vol. ii, chapter on the Nāyars.

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Dr. Marett himself has, with great truth, insisted on as the essence of religion.[1] I have called such practices magical, not only because they lack the emotional and the psychological elements of religion, but also because the fundamental presupposition in such performances is the power wielded by the magician, the "*orenda*" which he has acquired, over the ghosts.

This is very clear from the Nāyar ideas of *Thēvar* and *Pisāchu*. *Thēvar* can be propitiated but never conquered; while a *Pisāchu* (or ghost), though superior to man in power, intelligence and will-to-do-harm, can be rendered harmless and kept under control by magical practices. The former conception is clearly Hindu and relates only to Hindu gods. The spiritual ideas of the Nāyars themselves seem to be confined to ghosts, spirits, and to a comic elf called *Kutti-Chāttan*.

Before we proceed to consider them, the position of the magician in the Nāyar community has to be made clear. It is generally taken for granted by anthropological writers that wherever social life is regulated by magical practices the *Shaman* comes to be held in reverence. It is very interesting, therefore, to notice that the Nāyars never accepted the superiority of the magician, and never accorded him any privilege. The magico-medicine man is, on the other hand, considered to be a sort of servant-in-attendance on a nobleman's family, something like a family doctor. The explanation that it is due to the warlike character of the Nāyars is clearly inapplicable, as the magician attained kingly powers among the Masai, for example, whose society is also organised for purposes of war. The fact that the *Kāniyān* (or the magico-medicine-man) is not only not venerated, but actually considered an inferior, may be more due to the effect of caste-system, which places Nāyars high among the social scale.

The *Kāniyān* is, of course, recognised as a necessary person. He gets from all the houses of the village settled remuneration, mostly in coco-nuts. He is not otherwise paid for ordinary consultation, and he is bound to attend to every case in the village without fail. For special exertions of his magical powers he has special payments settled by village custom. He has power, both inherited and acquired, to cast-off spirits, to perform preventive magic, and keep general control over ghosts.

There are supposed to be three kinds of spirits, *Prētam*, *Bhutam*, and *Pisāchu*. A *Prētam* is the spirit of a dead man. The ghosts of men who died in the ordinary course of events are not really *Prētams*, because they do not wander about to overpower people and drink their blood. It is generally the ghosts of men who died as a result of foul play, or by accidents such as drowning, or by terrible diseases such as smallpox and cholera that wander about at nights. A *Bhutam* is seen generally in marshy districts and does not always hurt people unless they go very near him. A *Pisāchu* is a general spirit of the air causing such diseases as smallpox. All these

[1] Threshold of Religion: Essays on Pre-animistic Religion, the Birth of Humility, and Is Tabu negative magic?

high above his reach unless, of course, there is something near by on which he could climb. He cannot untie a knot, as he does not possess fingers, though he can open the strongest lock. What rich people do to keep their money out of his reach is to tie a knot on the purse and keep it locked in a safe, the latter precaution being necessary against human hands that possess fingers.

Kutti Chattan can, of course, be tamed by magicians and bribed to do whatever his patrons like. There is a story that a Brahmin landlord who was also a magician tamed a *Kutti Chattan* and used him for the purpose of keeping a watch on his things. A Christian tenant of his who had gone to pay the rent, not knowing the existence of the invisible and mysterious detective, stole certain things and took them home with him. But lo! *Kutti Chattan* had followed him, and the man was found dead next morning, and the stolen things were in their place. Such is the power of *Kutti Chattan*, the household elf of Malabar.

Whether the practices here narrated and the belief in the existence of a "naughty elf" amount to religion depends very much upon the definition we give to it. Though they are distinctly social and possess social sanction, I do not think it can be called religion, because there is a fundamental difference in the emotional and psychic aspects of religious experience and practice, and such social beliefs and customs as I have described here.

But side by side with this there also exists "black magic," sinister, selfish, and anti-social. It is fast disappearing, more as a result of economic pressure than because of any growing disbelief in it. A young man has no time now to devote himself entirely to sacrificing goats and birds all night and chanting formulæ so that he might become possessed of magical power. Those young men who have devoted themselves to such practices are, however, looked upon with great fear. The community does not like such practices, and though these magicians may excite fear, they are also aware of the general belief that they will some day come to a disastrous end.

Their practices are carried on in secret and nobody knows what they do except those initiated. Their assistance is procured only by people who want to do harm to others or satisfy ignoble desires. A man often gets the help of a magician of this sort to perform his "art" so that an enemy of his who is gone on a pilgrimage may not return. They are avoided by all decent people, and society in general, though it fears their "art," considers them charlatans.

There are many minor superstitions that can be only briefly noticed here.

The Evil Eye.—The magical effect of the evil eye is a matter of very serious concern among Nāyar women. I remember being taken to task for telling a woman how healthy her boy looked, and must add that I felt as if I had been convicted of a heinous crime when four or five days later I was told that the child was ill. The entire feminine opinion of the village was convinced that the child was suffering from my evil eye, and a good many *mantrams*, or magical formulæ, were said over it before the child was well again.

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only training was the training of the memory, and the learned pedagogue never bestowed a thought on cultivating the thinking powers or the originality of his pupils. But this type of school and school-master is fast disappearing under the modern regime of elementary schools.

Next in importance to the school-master is the Kaniyan, an indispensable factor in the affairs and ceremonies of the village.[1]

Then come the artisan classes whose services are necessary in the construction of houses, and the making of implements of agriculture. They were paid for their work either in kind or in coin.

The other men of importance in the village economic life were the physician, the village washerman, and the village barber. The village physician was a man of parts; for, not only did he tend the sick and the ailing, but also cast out devils from persons possessed, and with the aid of well prepared charms guarded them from the effects of the evil eye. The village washermen were of the Veluthédan and the Mannán caste. The services of the former were always requisitioned when people wished to become free from pollution, an act the omission of which leads to outcasting.

The village barber is another indispensable factor in the village ceremony and is employed for the shaving before all ceremonies. His privileges cannot be encroached upon by his own caste-men from other villages.

The village organisation above described is preserved to a certain extent even now and most probably the Kaniyan's profession will survive all other relics of Hindu institutions, as his services are considered to be of essential importance in matters of every day life.

Village pastimes.

The ordinary games pursued by the young men of the village are the foot-ball matches, *Attakalam*, *Kayyámkali*, and *Kaikottikkali* (a favourite circular dance of the women), *Uzhinjúl* and others, while cards and chess are common enough on festive occasions. Cock-fighting is an interesting pastime among the lower classes.

The most important of the village pastimes are the dramatic performances, a description of which is given in the following pages. The drama in Malabar sprang into being in

1. Vide my account of the Kaniyans, Vol. I, Chap. XI, pages 190-93.

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776 [782] the malignant propensities of those spirits. The most popular of the festivals is the *Mandalam*, which begins on the first of 796 Vrischigam (middle of November) and lasts for forty-one days. 776 In addition to the daily *pújas* to the image of Bhagavati by Brahman priests, special rites and ceremonies (*Kúlameshuthum Páttum*) are also performed by a particular class of Sudras to the figure of the goddess made on the floor by means of 796 coloured powders, while the devotees sing songs in her praise 796 to the accompaniment of lute-like musical instruments. A [534] man in a fantastic dress with an array of jingling bells round [532] his loins, heavy sounding bell-metal anklets on each foot and a scythe-shaped sword in his hand impersonates the goddess and dances to the sound of tom-toms round the figure of the god- [785] dess Bhadrakáli on the floor. The *Velichapád*, as he is called, [787] becomes highly excited and in his frenzy sometimes even cuts his forehead and causes it to bleed. He speaks, or rather the deity speaks through him, in broken yet commanding tones wholly unlike his own and makes oracular responses to the enquiries addressed to him.

796 On a night in the latter part of the month of Dhanu (early 776 in January), a golden image of the goddess is placed on the back [532] of a big decorated elephant, and, amidst the beating of drums, [789] the firing of pop-guns and crackers, is taken out in procession. [231] The elephant with the goddess is supported on each side by elephants whose numbers vary according to the means of the [791] villagers. The *Velichapád* is indispensable and is accompanied by a group of well-dressed women and girls, each carrying in her hand a plate (*Idlam*) full of rice and a light placed on the [782] top of it. The festival ends with a display of fire-works, and the ceremony closes with the sacrifice of goats or fowls. On the same principle but on different lines are celebrated various propitiatory and sacrificial festivals in honour of the other [782] aforesaid deities. Generally, after the harvests, the *Velicha-pádu* are taken out in procession to the Hindu houses in each village to receive offerings of a measure of paddy and small coins.

776 *Sásta* or *Ayyappan*.—According to Keralólpathi, Parasu- 778 rama with the object of protecting the newly created country (Kérala) is said to have established many temples and dedicat- [788] ed them to this deity. The most important of these is at Sabarimala in the Chengannur Taluk of Travancore, which

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A VELICHAPADU

[facing p. 84]

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775 [881] time. At the period of puberty and after child-birth women are especially liable to the attacks of these aërial beings. [846] Charms and incantations, offerings and sacrifices, are the most [789] requisite to counteract the evils that demons do, and iron [782] rings, iron staffs, and leather shoes, are some of the specifics that help to keep the demons at a distance.

[787] They make their abode chiefly in the palmyra and *pála* trees, but some of them occupy even dwelling houses. Others take the shape of human beings, while yet others possess human beings.

775 782 Their name is legion, and they exist by the offerings of their votaries and their tormented victims. Against the machinations of these demons, the sorcerers and exorcists bring to [776] bear the influence of their special guardian deities who in turn [791] must be propitiated with offerings before they can be called upon to use their beneficial strength. In the case of the evil [783] spirit of him who has died an unnatural death, a Brahman magician purifies the spirit by means of certain ceremonies called *Tilahóma* (an offering of sesamum seeds to *agni* or fire). [789] A Chendus Nambuthiri presides at such ceremonies and transfers the spirit to an image of gold, silver, or wood which is afterwards placed in a Vishnu temple or enshrined in a small building put up for that purpose, there to rest in peace.

771 346 775 [753] [796] In the State, temples are dedicated to various demons, the chief among them being the Avanangáttil Cháttan in Triprayar. The temples dedicated to the small-pox demon correspond to the *Péy Kóvils* or devil temples of the Tamil Districts. In these temples are to be found the instruments and symbols of demon worship, the dancing sticks or wands, the priests' garments, tridents, etc., whilst in others there is nothing save the images of demons. There is also an officiat- [793] ing priest, who is the devil driver and the devil dancer, and [791] who at times even becomes a *Velichapád* inspired to communicate to the votaries, who consult him in times of illness and calamity, the wishes and intentions of that particular demon.

771 225 **Worship of animals and plants.** To a Hindu all organic life is sacred, and his creed is not to injure any living thing, while among the animals worshipped by him the cow occupies the first place. The cow is *Kámadhénu*, the giver of all things, and hence whenever a cow is approached, it is touched

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any rent for it, but on the contrary, received payment as shampooers and masseurs of their landlord. Fees for those services were, on an average, twelve annas per session, and they received the money at regular intervals from seven to fourteen or twenty one days. Four times a year (every "season"), they were also entitled to two bags of rice, food, oil for massage and a bath(?). (I am not quite clear as to what the latter item stands for, but this is what I have in my notes.)

On the 26th of November, 1949, I visited a *Tol-kollan* household, at Meitenadesam, near Ottappalam. The name of this sub-caste means literally "skin-workers", and its members are leather-workers and cobblers. The house in which this family lived was the most miserable of all those we had or were still to see. It stood in the coconut groves on the outskirts of Ottappalam, and we went there on foot. It was a broken down construction of woven palm leaves and mud walls and the thatch on the roof was in bad condition. An old lady called Kurumba (see Fig. 14), sat just outside the front door, bare breasted and with enlarged holes in the lobes of her ears so that she could accomodate the sizeable gold lumps which are inserted here in Malayalam fashion. With her was her elderly daughter, Kunji, who received us. She was very polite and insisted on offering us some fresh coconut milk.

When we asked her about polyandry, she scoffed at the idea and said that in her family at least, the practice had been given up already in the generation of her father and mother. The men quarrelled too much about the common wife, she said, and besides, the women resented it and did not want it any more. There were members of her sub-caste who were still polyandrous, but as they were few and far between it would not be easy to locate them.

Under the circumstances, it seemed useless to make out a genealogy of these people, and I did not have time to look for a polyandrous *Tol-kollan* family elsewhere.

From this house, in the evening of the same day and with the same interpreters and guides, I went on to the home of some *Kanisans* or astrologers, who are also known as *Panikkars* locally. Theirs was a better dwelling, standing hidden in a thick grove of plantains and coconut trees well shaded and pleasant. We were received by a man called Ramankuti, thirty five years old, who offered us some chairs to sit on and very readily answered our questions.

He told us that his household bore the name of Pellarmangalam, and that his *kalarikel* was similarly called. It appeared that *Kanisans* do not have *tarawads* either, and that their patrilineal clans are called "gymna-

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Kanisans
Manans

siums" too – for what reason, I could not find out; I could see no relation between astrology and a gymnasium. Like the *Kolla-kurups*, they also had *kiriyams* which were exogamous as the *kalarikels* were; the informant's matrilineal clan was called Manga. Inheritance was *makkathayam*.

The family living in the house here, was divided into two sections. The first, of which Ramankuti was the eldest, consisted of himself and his brother, Ticheri, three years younger than him. Their father, who was now dead, had successively had two wives, Lakshmi and Kalyany, both of them still alive and living in the house; the first section was descendant from the first wife, while the other was issued from the second. Kalyany had had six children, of which, Paru, aged thirty, was the eldest; there were four brothers, Pachu, Shanghuni, Kumaran and Gopalkrishnan, and a younger daughter called Nani, aged twelve. The interesting part of the organization was that the two sections had both contracted polyandrous marriages: Ramankuti and Ticheri with one wife, Madhevi aged twenty eight: their four half brothers with Devaki, twenty three years old. Both women were from other *kalarikels*, the first from Kangal and the other from Kavalapara. They all lived in the same house, however, with Nani, only Paru having married Krishnan of Kutiparli *kalarikel* and having gone off to live with him. Paru had three children with Krishnan, as did Madhevi with the informant and his brother. The four brothers had only one little daughter, aged one year, with Devaki. The genealogy, as it was dictated to me, is given in Table 16.

Ramankuti told me that he and Pachu were the fully-fledged astrologers of the family. Kumaran and Gopalkrishnan were studying the art. Ticheri did odd jobs as a labourer, and Shanghuni was employed as a workman in the local match factory. The house that they all lived in was rented on a *kudiviruppu* lease for which they paid eight annas a year to the *janmi* of the land upon which it stood, a Nambudri Brahmin called Totapai Mana Nilakanda Nambudripad.

On the 22nd of November, 1949, I went to Lakkidi to visit the house of a *Manan*. These people are washermen and barbers, and they play an important role in Kerala as it is they and they alone who can wash the polluted clothes of menstruating Nambudri Brahmin and Nayar women. But they are also dancers in the temple on festive occasions.

We found the house for which we were looking, in the actual village of Lakkidi, in the vicinity of the railway station, near the river. It was a moderately large, well-to-do building, standing isolated in a large compound, in which clothes had been laid out to dry on the ground.

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 210]

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Manans
Panans

first moved to Mangode village, where Kali came from, for eleven years. Today they were living at Managhat, where Erechen had found it easier to get work.

As Kunji, my aged informant, was getting tired, we now took on Krishnan, son of the late Krishnan by his second wife, Kunji (the repetition of the same names in a family in Kerala is very confusing). He helped us to check all this material and to correct some inaccuracies which had crept in. I noticed that in some cases it was impossible to obtain the name of the *tarawad*, and that the name of the village would be given instead. There were, however, no *kalarikels* with the Manans, I was told. The patrilineal clans were exogamous, as were also the matrilineal *kiriyams* of these people, although they were not very well known and practically neglected in present-day marriages. Inheritance was *makkathayam*, as expected, but I could get no confirmation of the reported four endogamous subdivisions described in the *Gazeteer of the Malabar and Anjengo Districts*, p. 130 (see Bibliography).

This Manan family was living on ground belonging to a Nambudri Brahmin *janmi* called Mangala Mana C.M.C. Narayana Nambudripad, but they did not pay him any rent. They were there more as his employees and, in exchange for dwelling space, rendered him the invaluable services which he needed from them as washermen and barbers.

In the afternoon of the same day of the 25th of November, 1949, upon which I had visited a Thandan household (see above, p. 189), I went to Palappuram to see the family of a *Panan* (exorcist and leaf umbrella maker).

They lived in a poor but neat and cleanly house, situated in a rather thickly overgrown grove of the usual Kerala vegetation. On the verandah of the modest building of dried cow-dung and mud, a bare breasted woman, Sita, aged forty five, and three boys awaited us. She received us nicely and spoke quite readily. She seemed resigned to her poverty and conditions and only complained to us that she was not able to give the boys more and proper food.

She told us that she lived with the surviving husband of a once polyandrous union, in which she had been married when she was eighteen to two brothers, Panju, who had died two years after the wedding, at twenty one, and Korappan, her present forty four year old husband. She had had a daughter, Kunji, within the first year of her marriage, and four boys afterwards with Korappan. All the children, including the twenty six year old eldest girl, were unmarried; she was still breastfeeding the youngest, two and a half year old Kumaran. This, as I

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[787] the results of his calculations on a piece of palmyra leaf, with his opinion as to the fitness or otherwise of the match, and hands it over to the bridegroom's relations. If the horoscopes agree, a day is then and there fixed for the [212] celebration of the marriage. This date is also written down on two pieces of cadjan (palm leaf), one of which is handed over to the bride's Karanavan, and the other [791] to the bridegroom's relations. The astrologer and the [574] bridegroom's party are then feasted in the bride's house, and the former also receives presents in the shape of [431] money or cloth. This preliminary ceremony, which is invariably performed at all pudamuris in North Malabar, is called pudamuri kurikkal, but is unknown in South Malabar. Some three or four days prior to the date fixed for the celebration of the pudamuri, the bridegroom visits his Karanavans and elders in caste, [584] to obtain formal leave to marry. The bridegroom on such occasion presents his elders with betel and nuts, and obtains their formal sanction to the wedding. On the day appointed, the bridegroom proceeds after sunset to the house of the bride, accompanied by a number of his friends. He goes in procession, and is received at the gate of the house by the bride's party, and conducted with his friends to seats provided in the tekkini [431] or southern hall of the house. There the bridegroom [574] distributes presents (dānam) or money gifts to the Brāhmans assembled. After this, the whole party is treated to a sumptuous banquet. It is now time for the astrologer to appear, and announce the auspicious hour fixed. He does it accordingly, and receives his dues. The bridegroom is then taken by one of his friends to the padinhatta or principal room of the house. The bridegroom's party has, of course, brought with them a quantity of new cloths, and betel leaves and nuts. The

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
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bangle there by a messenger. An Akattu Charna Nāyar wore an amulet to keep off the spirit of a Brāhman who died by drowning. Another had a silver ring, on which a piece of a bristle from an elephant's tail was arranged."

Tattooing is said by Mr. Subramani Aiyar not to be favoured by North Travancore Nāyars, and to be only practiced by Nāyar women living to the south of Quilon. Certain accounts trace it to the invasion of Travancore by a Moghul Sirdar in 1680 A.D. In modern times it has become rare. The operation is performed by women of the Odda or Kurava caste before a girl reaches the twelfth year.

Concerning the religious worship of the Nāyars, Mr. Subramani Aiyar writes that "Buchanan notes that the proper deity of the Nāyars is Vishnu, though they wear the mark of Siva on their foreheads. By this is merely meant that they pay equal reverence to both Siva and Vishnu, being Smartas converted to the tenets of Sankaracharya. Besides worshipping the higher Hindu deities, the Nāyars also manifest their adoration for several minor ones, such as Mātan, Utayam, Yakshi, Chattan, Chantakarnan, Murti, Maruta, and Arukula. Most of these have granite representations, or at least such emblems as a sword or a cane, and are provided with a local habitation. Besides these, persons who have met with accidental death, and girls who have died before their tāli-tying ceremony, are specially worshipped under the designations of Kazhichchavu and Kannichchavu. Magicians are held in some fear, and talismanic amulets are attached to the waist by members of both sexes. Kuttichattan, the mischievous imp of Malabar, is supposed to cause much misery. Various spirits are worshipped on the Tiruvonam day in the month of Avani (August-September), on the Uchcharam or 28th

435 Site values of land for building are getting higher and higher in the 'town', chiefly because the Shoranur-Cochin Railway now runs through this place, the principal offices of the taluk are here, and a high school has just been opened. Rs. 500 per acre may be paid in the 'town'; Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 in the rest of the village area. But the best wet land fetches up to Rs. 1,500 per acre. Cultivable land fetches far higher prices than building land, because only land unfit for cultivation, of which there is enough, is used for building.

423 The practice of exchanging lands is unknown. Generally, though not always, holdings are continuous. Field huts, built in [343] the midst of their fields, are often used by big farmers. The seeds, the harvested paddy and other crops, the stock, the implements, etc., are kept there.

286 *Subsidiary industries.*—Weaving is not practised. In the north-eastern part of the State, however, handloom weaving of an exquisite sort and also of a rough character is practised.

285 Mat-weaving of an exquisite pattern out of certain reeds duly coloured is practised by a set of people locally known as 'Koravas.'
735 The condition of these men, however, is miserable. They have no capital, no organization or culture, but usually make their wares to order, though now and then a few enterprising middlemen avail [787] themselves of these people's skill. They talk a jargon of Tamil and Malayalam, and their females, like gipsies, beg from house to [791] house and profess themselves to be adepts in palmistry. They make mats costing from Re. 1 to Rs. 15 or Rs. 20. They yet live from hand to mouth; and I have my doubts whether they will be able to keep up their skill unless knowing people help to raise their economic condition.

564 Every village moreover contains within its borders the following castes who follow their hereditary crafts:—the Marasari (carpenter), Kallasari (mason), Tattan (goldsmith), Musari (brazier), Kollan (blacksmith), and Tolkollan (leather-worker). There are a few families of each of these castes in Watakanchery also. "As their services are much in requisition and as they earn better wages than unskilled labourers, they are still engaged in their hereditary occupation. The first five groups are socially in a par with each other. They all interdine, but do not intermarry. But the Tolkollans are considered inferior in status to the rest and cannot touch them without causing pollution, probably on account of their [595] work in leather which in its raw state is considered impure. Polyandry of the fraternal type was prevalent among them, several brothers marrying one wife and the children being treated as common to all. This practice however is fast dying out, if it has [783] not already done so." (Census Reports.) One special feature in the caste-hierarchy is that these people are made to stand at a specified distance while approaching the higher castes (24 feet is the rule).

466 These castes minister to the every day needs of the community, executing their work generally to order. As they are very poor, they cannot afford to work on their own account on a commercial
326 scale. The village usually contains a recognized *desa-asari* (village smith) to whom the farmers pay a certain amount of paddy at the harvesting season of the year for the repair of their implements. None but the village-smith is entitled to this dole. These may entertain apprentices from their own caste-people, though the